

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXX. WHAT CAME OF THE MEETING.

NOT a word was said in the cab as Lord Silverbridge took his sister to Carlton Terrace, and he was leaving her without any reference to the scene which had taken place, when an idea struck him that this would be cruel. "Mary," he said, "I was very sorry for all that."

"It was not my doing."

"I suppose it was nobody's doing. But I am very sorry that it occurred. I think that you should have controlled yourself."

"No!" she almost shouted.

"I think so."

"No; if you mean by controlling myself, holding my tongue. He is the man I love—whom I have promised to marry."

"But, Mary—do ladies generally embrace their lovers in public?"

"No; nor should I. I never did such a thing in my life before. But as he was there I had to show that I was not ashamed of him! Do you think I should have done it if you all had not been there?" Then again she burst into tears.

He did not quite know what to make of it. Mabel Grex had declared that she had behaved like an angel. But yet, as he thought of what he had seen, he shuddered with vexation. "I was thinking of the governor," he said.

"He shall be told everything."

"That you met Tregear?"

"Certainly; and that I—kissed him. I will do nothing that I am ashamed to tell everybody."

"He will be very angry."

"I cannot help it. He should not treat me as he is doing. Mr. Tregear is a gentleman. Why did he let him come? Why did you bring him? But it is of no use. The thing is settled. Papa can break my heart, but he can't make me say that I am not engaged to Mr. Tregear."

On that night Mary told the whole of her story to Lady Cantrip. There was nothing that she tried to conceal. "I got up," she said, "and threw my arms round him. Is he not all the world to me?"

"Had it been planned?" asked Lady Cantrip.

"No, no! Nothing had been planned. They are cousins and very intimate, and he goes there constantly. Now I want you to tell papa all about it."

Lady Cantrip began to think that it had been an evil day for her when she had agreed to take charge of this very determined young lady; but she consented at once to write to the duke. As the girl was in her hands she must take care not to lay herself open to reproaches. As this objectionable lover had either contrived a meeting, or had met her without contriving, it was necessary that the duke should be informed. "I would rather you wrote the letter," said Lady Mary. "But pray tell him that all along I have meant him to know all about it."

Till Lady Cantrip seated herself at her writing-table she did not know how great the difficulty would be. It cannot in any circumstance be easy to write to a father as to his daughter's love for an objectionable lover; but the duke's character added much to the severity of the task. And then that embrace! She knew that the duke would be struck with horror as he read of such a tale, and she found herself

almost struck with horror as she attempted to write it. When she came to the point she found she could not write it. "I fear there was a good deal of warmth shown on both sides," she said, feeling that she was calumniating the man, as to whose warmth she had heard nothing. "It is quite clear," she added, "that this is not a passing fancy on her part."

It was impossible that the duke should be made to understand exactly what had occurred. That Silverbridge had taken Mary he did understand, and that they had together gone to Lord Grex's house. He understood also that the meeting had taken place in the presence of Silverbridge and of Lady Mabel. "No doubt it was all an accident," Lady Cantrip wrote. How could it be an accident?

"You had Mary up in town on Friday," he said to his son on the following Sunday morning.

"Yes, sir."

"And that friend of yours came in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you not know what my wishes are?"

"Certainly I do; but I could not help his coming. You do not suppose that anybody had planned it?"

"I hope not."

"It was simply an accident. Such an accident as must occur over and over again—unless Mary is to be locked up."

"Who talks of locking anybody up? What right have you to speak in that way?"

"I only meant that of course they will stumble across each other in London."

"I think I will go abroad," said the duke. He was silent for awhile, and then repeated his words. "I think I will go abroad."

"Not for long, I hope, sir."

"Yes; to live there. Why should I stay here? What good can I do here? Everything I see and everything I hear is a pain to me."

The young man of course could not but go back in his mind to the last interview which he had had with his father, when the duke had been so gracious and apparently so well pleased.

"Is there anything else wrong, except about Mary?" Silverbridge asked.

"I am told that Gerald owes about fifteen hundred pounds at Cambridge."

"So much as that! I knew he had a few horses there."

"It is not the money, but the absence

of principle, that a young man should have no feeling that he ought to live within certain prescribed means! Do you know what you have had from Mr. Morton?"

"Not exactly, sir."

"It is different with you. But a man, let him be who he may, should live within certain means. As for your sister, I think she will break my heart." Silverbridge found it to be quite impossible to say anything in answer to this. "Are you going to church?" asked the duke.

"I was not thinking of doing so particularly."

"Do you not ever go?"

"Yes; sometimes. I will go with you now, if you like it, sir."

"I had thought of going, but my mind is too much harassed. I do not see why you should not go."

But Silverbridge, though he had been willing to sacrifice his morning to his father—for it was, I fear, in that way that he had looked at it—did not see any reason for performing a duty which his father himself omitted. And there were various matters also which harassed him. On the previous evening, after dinner, he had allowed himself to back Prime Minister for the Leger to a very serious amount. In fact, he had plunged, and now stood to lose some twenty thousand pounds on the doings of the last night. And he had made these bets under the influence of Major Tifto. It was the remembrance of this, after the promise made to his father, that annoyed him the most. He was imbued with a feeling that it behoved him as a man to "pull himself together," as he would have said himself, and to live in accordance with certain rules. He could make the rules easily enough, but he had never yet succeeded in keeping any one of them. He had determined to sever himself from Tifto; and, in doing that, had intended to sever himself from affairs of the turf generally. This resolution was not yet a week old. It was on that evening that he had resolved that Tifto should no longer be his companion; and now he had to confess to himself that, because he had drunk three or four glasses of champagne, he had been induced by Tifto to make those wretched bets.

And he had told his father that he intended to ask Mabel Grex to be his wife. He had so committed himself that the offer must now be made. He did not specially

regret that, though he wished that he had been more reticent. "What a fool a man is to blurt out everything!" he said to himself. A wife would be a good thing for him; and where could he possibly find a better wife than Mabel Grex? In beauty she was no doubt inferior to Miss Boncassen. There was something about Miss Boncassen which made it impossible to forget her. But Miss Boncassen was an American, and on many accounts out of the question. It did not occur to him that he would fall in love with Miss Boncassen; but still it seemed hard to him that this intention of marriage should stand in his way of having a good time with Miss Boncassen for a few weeks. No doubt there were objections to marriage. It clipped a fellow's wings. But then, if he were married, he might be sure that Tifto would be laid aside. It was such a great thing to have got his father's assured consent to a marriage. It meant complete independence in money matters.

Then his mind ran away to a review of his father's affairs. It was a genuine trouble to him that his father should be so unhappy. Of all the griefs which weighed upon the duke's mind, that in reference to his sister was the heaviest. The money which Gerald owed at Cambridge would be nothing if that other sorrow could be conquered. Nor had Tifto and his own extravagance caused the duke any incurable wounds. If Tregear could be got out of the way, his father, he thought, might be reconciled to other things. He felt very tender-hearted about his father; but he had no remorse in regard to his sister as he made up his mind that he would speak very seriously to Tregear.

He had wandered into St. James's Park, and had lighted by this time half-a-dozen cigarettes one after another, as he sat on one of the benches. He was a handsome youth, all but six feet high, with light hair, with round blue eyes, and with all that aristocratic look which had belonged so peculiarly to the late duke, but which was less conspicuous in the present head of the family. He was a young man whom you would hardly pass in a crowd without observing; but of whom you would say, after due observation, that he had not as yet put off all his childish ways. He now sat with his legs stretched out, with his cane in his hands, looking down upon the water. He was trying to think. He worked hard at thinking. But the bench was hard, and, upon the whole,

he was not satisfied with his position. He had just made up his mind that he would look up Tregear, when Tregear himself appeared on the path before him.

"Tregear!" exclaimed Silverbridge.

"Silverbridge!" exclaimed Tregear.

"What on earth makes you walk about here on a Sunday morning?"

"What on earth makes you sit there? That I should walk here, which I often do, does not seem to me odd. But that I should find you is marvellous. Do you often come?"

"Never was here in my life before. I strolled in because I had things to think of."

"Questions to be asked in Parliament? Notices of motions, Amendments in Committee, and that kind of thing?"

"Go on, old fellow."

"Or perhaps Major Tifto has made important revelations."

"D—— Major Tifto."

"With all my heart," said Tregear.

"Sit down here," said Silverbridge. "As it happened, at the moment when you came up I was thinking of you."

"That was kind."

"And I was determined to go to you. All this about my sister must be given up."

"Must be given up!"

"It can never lead to any good. I mean that there never can be a marriage." Then he paused, but Tregear was determined to hear him out. "It is making my father so miserable that you would pity him if you could see him."

"I dare say I should. When I see people unhappy I always pity them. What I would ask you to think of is this. If I were to commission you to tell your sister that everything between us should be given up, would not she be so unhappy that you would have to pity her?"

"She would get over it."

"And so will your father."

"He has a right to have his own opinion on such a matter."

"And so have I. And so has she. His rights in this matter are very clear and very potential. I am quite ready to admit that we cannot marry for many years to come, unless he will provide the money. You are quite at liberty to tell him that I say so. I have no right to ask your father for a penny, and I will never do so. The power is all in his hands. As far as I know my own purposes, I shall not make any immediate attempt even to see her."

We did meet, as you saw, the other day, by the merest chance. After that, do you think that your sister wishes me to give her up?"

"As for supposing that girls are to have what they wish, that is nonsense."

"For young men I suppose equally so. Life ought to be a life of self-denial, no doubt. Perhaps it might be my duty to retire from this affair, if by doing so I should sacrifice only myself. The one person of whom I am bound to think in this matter is the girl I love."

"That is just what she would say about you."

"I hope so."

"In that way you support each other. If it were any other man circumstanced just like you are, and any other girl placed like Mary, you would be the first to say that the man was behaving badly. I don't like to use hard language to you, but in such a case you would be the first to say of another man—that he was looking after the girl's money."

Silverbridge as he said this looked forward steadfastly on to the water, regretting much that cause for quarrel should have arisen, but thinking that Tregear would find himself obliged to quarrel. But Tregear after a few moments' silence, having thought it out, determined that he would not quarrel.

"I think I probably might," he said, laying his hand on Silverbridge's arm. "I think I perhaps might express such an opinion."

"Well, then!"

"I have to examine myself, and find out whether I am guilty of the meanness which I might perhaps be too ready to impute to another. I have done so, and I am quite sure that I am not drawn to your sister by any desire for her money. I did not seek her because she was a rich man's daughter, nor because she is a rich man's daughter will I give her up. She shall be mistress of the occasion. Nothing but a word from her shall induce me to leave her; but a word from her, if it comes from her own lips, shall do so." Then he took his friend's hand in his, and, having grasped it, walked away without saying another word.

CHAPTER XXXI. MISS BONCASSEN'S RIVER-PARTY. NO. I.

THRICE within the next three weeks did Lord Silverbridge go forth to ask Mabel to be his wife, but thrice in vain. On one

occasion she would talk on other things. On the second, Miss Cassewary would not leave her. On the third, the conversation turned in a very disagreeable way on Miss Boncassen, as to whom Lord Silverbridge could not but think that Lady Mabel said some very ill-natured things. It was no doubt true that he, during the last three weeks, had often been in Miss Boncassen's company, that he had danced with her, ridden with her, taken her to the House of Lords and to the House of Commons, and was now engaged to attend upon her at a river-party up above Maidenhead. But Mabel had certainly no right to complain. Had he not thrice during the same period come there to lay his coronet at her feet; and now, at this very moment, was it not her fault that he was not going through the ceremony?

"I suppose," she said, laughing, "that it is all settled."

"What is all settled?"

"About you and the American beauty."

"I am not aware that anything particular has been settled."

"Then it ought to be—oughtn't it? For her sake, I mean."

"That is so like an English woman," said Lord Silverbridge. "Because you cannot understand a manner of life a little different from your own you will impute evil."

"I have imputed no evil, Lord Silverbridge, and you have no right to say so."

"If you mean to assert," said Miss Cass, "that the manners of American young ladies are freer than those of English young ladies, it is you that are taking away their characters."

"I don't say it would be at all bad," continued Lady Mabel. "She is a beautiful girl, and very clever, and would make a charming duchess. And then it would be such a delicious change to have an American duchess."

"She wouldn't be a duchess."

"Well, countess, with duchessship before her in the remote future. Wouldn't it be a change, Miss Cass?"

"Oh, decidedly!" said Miss Cass.

"And very much for the better. Quite a case of new blood, you know. Pray don't suppose that I mean to object. Everybody who talks about it approves. I haven't heard a dissentient voice. Only as it has gone so far, and as English people are too stupid, you know, to understand all these new ways, don't you think perhaps——?"

"No, I don't think. I don't think anything except that you are very ill-natured." Then he got up, and, after making formal adieux to both the ladies, left the house.

As soon as he was gone Lady Mabel began to laugh, but the least apprehensive ears would have perceived that the laughter was affected. Miss Cassewary did not laugh at all, but sat bolt upright and looked very serious.

"Upon my honour," said the younger lady, "he is the most beautifully simple-minded human being I ever knew in my life."

"Then I wouldn't laugh at him."

"How can one help it? But of course I do it with a purpose."

"What purpose?"

"I think he is making a fool of himself. If somebody does not interfere he will go so far that he will not be able to draw back without misbehaving."

"I thought," said Miss Cassewary, in a very low voice, almost whispering, "I thought that he was looking for a wife elsewhere."

"You need not think of that again," said Lady Mab, jumping up from her seat. "I had thought of it too. But, as I told you before, I spared him. He did not really mean it with me; nor does he mean it with this American girl. Such young men seldom mean. They drift into matrimony. But she will not spare him. It would be a national triumph. All the States would sing a psalm of glory. Fancy a New York belle having compassed a duke!"

"I don't think it possible. It would be too horrid."

"I think it quite possible. As for me, I could teach myself to think it best as it is, were I not so sure I should be better for him than so many others. But I shouldn't love him."

"Why not love him?"

"He is such a boy. I should always treat him like a boy—spoiling him and petting him, but never respect him. Don't run away with any idea that I should refuse him from conscientious motives, if he were really to ask me. I too should like to be a duchess. I should like to bring all this misery at home to an end."

"But you did refuse him."

"Not exactly; because he never asked me. For the moment I was weak, and so I let him have another chance. I shall not have been a good friend to him if it ends in his marrying this Yankee."

Lord Silverbridge went out of the house in a very ill humour—which, however, left him when in the course of the afternoon he found himself up at Maidenhead with Miss Boncassen. Miss Boncassen at any rate did not laugh at him. And then she was so pleasant, so full of common sense, and so completely intelligent! "I like you," she had said, "because I feel that you will not think that you ought to make love to me. There is nothing I hate so much as the idea that a young man and a young woman can't be acquainted with each other, without some such tomfoolery as that." This had exactly expressed his own feeling. Nothing could be so pleasant as his intimacy with Isabel Boncassen.

Mrs. Boncassen seemed to be a homely person, with no desire either to speak or to be spoken to. She went out but seldom, and on those rare occasions did not in any way interfere with her daughter. Mr. Boncassen filled a prouder situation. Everybody knew that Miss Boncassen was in England because it suited Mr. Boncassen to spend many hours in the British Museum. But still the daughter hardly seemed to be under control from the father. She went alone where she liked; talked to those she liked; and did what she liked. Some of the young ladies of the day thought that there was a good deal to be said in favour of the freedom which she enjoyed.

There is, however, a good deal to be said against it. All young ladies cannot be Miss Boncassens, with such an assurance of admirers as to be free from all fear of loneliness. There is a comfort for a young lady in having a pied-à-terre to which she may retreat in case of need. In American circles, where girls congregate without their mothers, there is a danger felt by young men that, if a lady be once taken in hand, there will be no possibility of getting rid of her—no mamma to whom she may be taken and under whose wings she may be dropped. "My dear," said an old gentleman the other day walking through an American ball-room, and addressing himself to a girl whom he knew well—"My dear——" But the girl bowed and passed on, still clinging to the arm of the young man who accompanied her. But the old gentleman was cruel and possessed of a determined purpose. "My dear," said he again, catching the young man tight by the collar and holding him fast. "Don't be afraid; I've got him; he shan't desert

you; I'll hold him here till you have told me how your father does." The young lady looked as if she didn't like it, and the sight of her misery gave rise to a feeling that, after all, mammas perhaps may be a comfort.

But in her present phase of life Miss Boncassen suffered no misfortune of this kind. It had become a privilege to be allowed to attend upon Miss Boncassen, and the feeling of this privilege had been enhanced by the manner in which Lord Silverbridge had devoted himself to her. Fashion of course makes fashion. Had not Lord Silverbridge been so very much struck by the charm of the young lady, Lords Glasslough and Popplecourt would not perhaps have found it necessary to run after her. As it was, even that most unenergetic of young men, Dolly Longstaff, was moved to profound admiration.

On this occasion they were all up the river at Maidenhead. Mr. Boncassen had looked about for some means of returning the civilities offered to him, and had been instigated by Mrs. Montacute Jones to do it after this fashion. There was a magnificent banquet spread in a summer-house on the river bank. There were boats, and there was a band, and there was a sward for dancing. There was lawn-tennis; and fishing-rods, which nobody used; and, better still, long shady secluded walks in which gentlemen might stroll—and ladies, too, if they were kind enough. The whole thing had been arranged by Mrs. Montacute Jones. As the day was fine, as many of the old people had abstained from coming, as there were plenty of young men of the best sort, and as nothing had been spared in reference to external comforts, the party promised to be a success. Every most lovely girl in London of course was there, except Lady Mabel Grex. Lady Mabel was in the habit of going everywhere, but on this occasion she had refused Mrs. Boncassen's invitation. "I don't want to see her triumphs," she had said to Miss Cass.

Everybody went down by railway, of course, and innumerable flies and carriages had been provided to take them to the scene of action. Some immediately got into boats and rowed themselves up from the bridge, which, as the thermometer was standing at eighty in the shade, was an inconsiderate proceeding. "I don't think I am quite up to that," said Dolly Longstaff when it was proposed to him to take an oar. "Miss Amazon will do it. She

rows so well, and is so strong." Whereupon Miss Amazon, not at all abashed, did take the oar; and as Lord Silverbridge was on the seat behind her with the other oar she probably enjoyed her task.

"What a very nice sort of person Lady Cantrip is." This was said to Silverbridge by that generally silent young nobleman, Lord Popplecourt. The remark was the more singular because Lady Cantrip was not at the party, and the more so again because, as Silverbridge thought, there could be but little in common between the countess who had his sister in charge and the young lord beside him, who was not fast only because he did not like to risk his money.

"Well—yes; I daresay she is."

"I thought so, peculiarly. I was up at that place at Richmond yesterday."

"The devil you were. What were you doing at The Horns?"

"Lady Cantrip's grandmother was—I don't quite know what she was, but something to us. I know I've got a picture of her at Popplecourt. Lady Cantrip wanted to ask me something about it, and so I went down. I was so glad to make acquaintance with your sister."

"You saw Mary, did you?"

"Oh, yes; I lunched there. I'm to go down and meet the duke some day."

"Meet the duke!"

"Why not?"

"No reason on earth—only I can't imagine the governor going to Richmond for his dinner. Well! I am very glad to hear it. I hope you'll get on well with him."

"I was so much struck with your sister."

"Yes; I dare say," said Silverbridge, turning away into the path where he saw Miss Boncassen standing with some other ladies. It certainly did not occur to him that Popplecourt was to be brought forward as a suitor for his sister's hand.

"I believe this is the most lovely place in the world," Miss Boncassen said to him.

"We are so much the more obliged to you for bringing us here."

"We don't bring you. You allow us to come with you and see all that is pretty and lovely."

"Is it not your party?"

"Father will pay the bill, I suppose—as far as that goes. And mother's name was put on the cards. But of course we know what that means. It is because

you and a few others like you have been so kind to us that we are able to be here at all."

"Everybody, I should think, must be kind to you."

"I do have a good time pretty much, but nowhere so good as here. I fear that when I get back I shall not like New York."

"I have heard you say, Miss Boncassen, that Americans were more likeable than the English."

"Have you? Well, yes; I think I have said so. And I think it is so. I'd sooner have to dance with a bank clerk in New York, than with a bank clerk here."

"Do you ever dance with bank clerks?"

"Oh dear yes. At least, I suppose so. I dance with whoever comes up. We haven't got lords in America, you know?"

"You have got gentlemen?"

"Plenty of them; but they are not so easily defined as lords. I do like lords."

"Do you?"

"Oh, yes; and ladies—countesses, I mean, and women of that sort. Your Lady Mabel Grex is not here. Why wouldn't she come?"

"Perhaps you didn't ask her."

"Oh, yes, I did; especially for your sake."

"She is not my Lady Mabel Grex," said Lord Silverbridge with unnecessary energy.

"But she will be."

"What makes you think that?"

"You are devoted to her."

"Much more to you, Miss Boncassen."

"That is nonsense, Lord Silverbridge."

"Not at all."

"It is also—untrue."

"Surely I must be the best judge of that myself."

"Not a doubt; a judge not only whether it be true, but if true whether expedient, or even possible. What did I say to you when we first began to know each other?"

"What did you say?"

"That I liked knowing you—that was frank enough—that I liked knowing you because I knew that there would be no tomfoolery of love-making." Then she paused; but he did not quite know how to go on with the conversation at once, and she continued her speech. "When you condescend to tell me you are devoted to me, as though that were the kind of thing that I expect to have said when I take a walk with a young man in a wood, is not that the tomfoolery of love-making?"

She stopped and looked at him, so that he was obliged to answer.

"Then why do you ask me if I am devoted to Lady Mabel? Would not that be tomfoolery too?"

"No. If I thought so I would not have asked the question. I did specially invite her to come here because I thought you would like it. You have got to marry somebody."

"Some day, perhaps."

"And why not her?"

"If you come to that, why not you?"

He felt himself to be getting into deep waters as he said this; but he had a meaning to express if only he could find the words to express it. "I don't say whether it is tomfoolery, as you call it, or not; but whatever it is, you began it."

"Yes, yes. I see. You punish me for my unpremeditated impertinence in suggesting that you are devoted to Lady Mabel by the premeditated impertinence of pretending to be devoted to me."

"Stop a moment. I cannot follow that." Then she laughed. "I will swear that I did not intend to be impertinent."

"I hope not."

"I am devoted to you."

"Lord Silverbridge!"

"I think you are——"

"Stop, stop. Do not say it."

"Well, I won't—not now. But there has been no tomfoolery."

"May I ask a question, Lord Silverbridge? You will not be angry? I would not have you angry with me."

"I will not be angry," he said.

"Are you not engaged to marry Lady Mabel Grex?"

"No."

"Then I beg your pardon. I was told that you were engaged to her. And I thought your choice was so fortunate, so happy! I have seen no girl here that I admire half so much. She almost comes up to my idea of what a young woman should be."

"Almost!"

"Now I am sure that if not engaged to her you must be in love with her, or my praise would have suffered."

"Though one knows a Lady Mabel Grex, one may become acquainted with a Miss Boncassen."

There are moments when stupid people say clever things, obtuse people say sharp things, and good-natured people say ill-natured things.

"Lord Silverbridge," she said, "I did not expect that from you."

"Expect what? I meant it simply."

"I have no doubt you meant it simply. We Americans think ourselves sharp, but I have long since found out that we may meet more than our matches over here. I think we will go back. Mother means to try to get up a quadrille."

"You will dance with me?"

"I think not. I have been walking with you, and I had better dance with someone else."

"You can let me have one dance."

"I think not. There will not be many."

"Are you angry with me?"

"Yes, I am—there." But as she said this she smiled. "The truth is, I thought I was getting the better of you, and you turned round and gave me a pat on the head to show me that you could be master when it pleased you. You have defended your intelligence at the expense of your good-nature."

"I'll be shot if I know what it all means," he said, just as he was parting with her.

THE BADGER AND ITS ENEMIES.

"AND what do you consider vermin?" we asked of old Moleskin, the keeper of our friend Spurry, a great game-preserving Norfolk squire.

"Varmint, I s'pose you mean, sir," observed Moleskin correctively. "Well, varmint be a crowd o' things: cats, polecats, weasels, stoats, carrion-crows, magpies, jays, hedgehogs."

"Anything else, Moleskin?"

"Yes, a precious many." Then after another pause: "Badgers, squirrels, herons, otters, and"—with great energy—"pow-cheers. I would shoot 'um all, had I my mind."

"Badgers, Moleskin?" we remarked deprecatingly.

"Ah—badgers; if they does nought else they kill the foxes, and sucks the cows."

"But foxes destroy the game," we suggested; "and it is the hedgehog, but falsely so, that is said to help itself to the new milk."

"Cuss the whole batch of 'um. I knows the fox is fond of the game and the poultry, but master finds sport in they; and we marn't no longer bait the badgers, or even draw one, so we shoots 'um."

Herein did Moleskin furnish a text,

which, if we had liberty, we could amplify to some profit and interest. However, here we have the indiscriminate slaughter of one animal justified because society has declared badger-baiting to be brutal, and the preservation of another advocated for certain selfish reasons, not the least of which is the assertion that the hunted fox enjoys the chase, if anything, more than the dogs and the hunters. Hence one-sided prejudice thus far has triumphed; the dumb creation cannot speak for themselves, or fee or retain an advocate, and having nothing to say in their own defence, of course they are guilty of any, however absurd or unnatural, charge their enemies may be pleased to bring against them. Therefore many animals have been given, and retain, a bad name, while prejudice cries, Kill him, her, or it, and every man's hand is lifted in the glorious and highly meritorious work of extermination!

It will not be gainsaid that the game-keeper's object is solely and entirely to keep up a large head of game—in more simple words, an unnatural excess of three or four descriptions of creatures which from their undue abundance cannot be left to their own resources, but have during a greater part of the year to be fed by hand. And why such over-preservation? Simply that the Earls of Wholesale and other great guns may at their magnificent seats and slaughter-houses, kill, according to the newspapers, their hundreds of brace of pheasants, hares, woodcocks, &c.

Keepers may profess to kill rats and vermin proper, when they meet with them, but they destroy more systematically the great enemies of such a class of depredators. They shoot the terriers that kill the rats, they trap the cats that kill the mice, and they wage war against the hawks, the owls, the badgers, the otters, and everything they have sanctioned their own authority to kill by first prejudicing them in the eyes of their masters.

Thus, as it were, is the balance of nature upset by the over-preservation of game. The farmer, whose crops feed the game, is not the only sufferer, for he is but the purveyor of the people's food—the community losing in the ratio of the diminution of the supply.

No one who has lived, as does the writer, in the neighbourhood of a heavy game-preserve, but knows the difficulty there is to keep either a cat or a dog. A cat, though, that has taken to poaching is said to be ever afterwards but a bad

mouser. But we have reason to believe that poor pussy is often positively enticed into mischief by a bait rubbed over with her favourite valerian. We may, in such case, make a tolerable guess as to who is answerable here, just as we can in regard to the hare in the wire laid temptingly by the path of the poor man on his way home or to his work. As for dogs, it has been said publicly that a farmer had no business with any dogs on his place, and that the very shepherd's colley was an unnecessary nuisance, doing little more than disturbing the game, and calling his owner's eye to it. It will scarcely be credited that there was a favourite clause in some of the Norfolk lettings, that an occupier should not drill his turnips nor mow his wheat. Drilling caused the birds to run, and mowing left them no shelter. The keeper was to see to this, but the yeomen of Norfolk, to their honour, successfully resisted so monstrous and unwarrantable interference. Still the direct effect of the system is to humiliate and lower the spirits and energies of the farmers. How can a man properly respect himself when he knows he is more or less at the mercy of an ignorant self-sufficient underling? How can he do his best when he knows that all his efforts will be eventually thwarted, and all he has done as continually undone? What pride can he have in an occupation where an ignorant keeper can report and direct him? Over game-preserving lessens the production of the soil, stays the full employment of capital, mars the fair aim of industry and ability, breaks the golden links in the chain of creation, and silences the voice of enlightenment throughout the country, which would otherwise be raised successfully in behalf of many of God's creatures who are now forbidden to seek the hospitality of man in very fear of being received with murderous treachery.

Let us take the first animal on Moleskin's amended list of "varmint," and examine the charges against the badger, and after fairly weighing its sins and its virtues, ask ourselves whether it deserves the verdict of annihilation which now hangs over its head in Britain.

A well-known foxhunter of Odiham tells us that in a dell of four acres, close to his house, he has reared for above fifteen years one or two litters of cubs, and has had a pair of badgers there for the last four years. He has also turned out others, and found them do no harm. Three years since a very fine male badger

was brought to him, dug out of the same earth with a dog-fox. He had at the period of this recital a badger of a year old in his garden, which was principally fed upon acorns and skim milk. Another, who denounces the selfish mania for indiscriminate massacre, tells us how badgers have been encouraged to make earths for foxes, and that as soon as the work was done the badger gave way and the fox took possession. The poor harmless badger has a host of enemies to one friend; to tolerate a colony of them is one thing, but a merciful compromise should be shown, for it is clear that so far from killing the foxes the latter is its master, turning it out of house and home. No wonder therefore if they do not always live on very neighbourly terms. The fact is, that from the extraordinary power of the badger's fore-paws, and immensely strong and horny claws, they are enabled to burrow with greater facility and speed than any other English animal—the mole, perhaps, excepted. As an instance of this power of underground progress we can from experience relate how a badger, after we had closed up both entrances of his earth with large stones with a view to secure him with spade and sack, contrived to tunnel at right angles from his couch, through several feet of soil, and to a distance so considerable as permitted of his escape before we had dug down to his lair. It is supposed by some close observers that it is the offensive odour of the fox which is repugnant to the extremely cleanly habits of the badger, and which drives him away from his adopted retreat: for it is noticed that if a fox frequents the badger's burrow the latter shortly after quits it altogether.

Moreover, in a state of semi-domestication, the badger manifests a very much greater amount of confidence, and displays none of that cowardly timidity and suspicion which throws the fox into a condition of the most abject terror at any unusual sight or sound, however trifling. Even the rustling of a leaf, or the appearance of a stranger a quarter of a mile off, puts this incorrigible thief and cunning knave on the *qui vive*, however tame he may otherwise appear; and however young he may have been when reduced to captivity, he grows up a rogue and a coward still. The badger, on the contrary, in the majority of many instances under our notice, appears endowed with a considerable amount of moral courage, and treats such trifles with supreme indifference,

seeming to be afraid neither of friend or foe.

The badger may be termed the British bear, and he hibernates like his foreign prototype. He is charged with robbing the wild bees, devouring honeycomb and brood alike. But he is equally fond of wasps, which he finds more plentiful, and which he digs out wherever he meets with their nests—a favourable set-off against his indulgence in the sweeter banquet. Then we are assured he is an inveterate mole-catcher; but moles are voted, right or wrong, a bore by most land-owners, or they would not employ regular men to kill them. Again, they make hearty meals in the wheat-fields when the corn is said to be “kerned.” But what do we find them doing in the pastures? Turning over the sun-dried cow-dung in search of the most destructive beetle pest and its larvæ. The wretches, indeed, dare to eat apples! We are informed of a badger who was caught picking up the windfalls—doubtless so to him—in an orchard, from which, the stone fence being high, he could not escape, and expiated his offence by being beaten with stakes by the farmer's men for nearly an hour, surrendering his life only after having been prodded several times with a stable-fork. What would be said if every old sow and her litter were thus treated for a similar offence, or if one hundredth part of such infiction were dealt out to a truant school-boy, although the graceless varlet was fully aware of the nature of the offence he was committing. It is edifying to read that the two-legged brutes expressed their surprise and indignation at the creature growling, snarling, and showing its teeth while under the process of a prolonged martyrdom.

As for the destruction of game by the badger, on which the genus *Moleskin* relies so much as a justification for its persecution unto death, there exists the widest difference of opinion even amongst gamekeepers. Dr. C. R. Bree, the well-known and observant naturalist, assures us that his cousin's head-keeper in Yorkshire is convinced that badgers do no harm in that way. He knew, however, of a suspicion of their digging down and disposing of young rabbits, for which the farmers would be the last to blame them, but his informant believed that this was the extent of their carnivorous delinquencies. If, from all his experience, the badger destroyed game, he, the doctor, thought

it must be from a perverted appetite, which is sometimes met with in human beings. “If not,” adds the doctor with feeling, “I fear poor piggy's fate is sealed like so many of our wild animals fast disappearing before the preservers of game and the so-called prosperity of the country.” The badger, and there is no refuting this, growls, snarls, and shows its teeth under provocation; in fact, its greatest sin is that it does not take killing kindly. But is this the animal's habit when unmolested? Quite the reverse. A gentleman in Suffolk had one supposed to be six months old and not long captured. It was, as he assures us, not at all ferocious, and never attempted to injure anybody. It ate raw meat, and bread and milk, but its favourite dish was earth-worms, for which it would follow even a stranger about and take them from the hand. It took no notice of an egg. It had a curious side-long gait, which is very likely to be the origin of the belief in some of the northern counties that it has two long legs on one side and gets them into a rut to run with more facility. It had no offensive smell and was particularly clean in its habits. It was eager to recover its liberty, which it was not long in effecting. Could even a model game-keeper produce a more satisfactory character from his last place? Still, there are other authorities, who are equally entitled to an opinion, who have given badgers live magpies, carrion-crows, and full-sized rats, of which they have greedily eaten, and from this argue that fur and feathers of a higher order would be equally acceptable to its appetite. Another and still stranger notion is hazarded that the badger is yet fonder of fresh-caught eels and trout. Priscilla Wakefield advances the same peculiarity in her *Instinct Displayed*: “And as a further proof of the capacity of different animals to receive new habits from education, I remember a badger at Lord Belmour's which pointed like a dog and accompanied his lordship on his shooting expeditions. He is likewise useful in a way more congenial to his nature—he fishes for his master, and brings the salmon out of the water without offering to eat them. Yet Lubbock informs his readers in his *Fauna of Norfolk*, that he had seen the marsh fishermen select rudd for their own cooking whilst they carried bream and roach home only for the dogs or the pig—for be it known that a Norfolk water-dog and a

marsh-pig are both piscivorous animals." Surely Priscilla Wakefield has confounded the habits of some other animal with those of the badger. The idea of a pig or a badger taking to the water and catching its own dish of fish is almost too much for our credulity.

From another fully authenticated account of a tame badger we learn that it was captured in a box-trap, and appeared then to be about one-third grown, afterwards attaining to the usual adult size. When first caught it was remarkably savage and morose in disposition, biting at everything that attempted to touch it; but on being placed in a dog-box and treated kindly its ferocity gradually disappeared, and it soon allowed itself to be patted and handled without offering to bite. In the course of a few months it became so familiar as to follow its master about the garden or in the room, and playfully seize hold of and pull at his trousers like a playful puppy, whose manners in this respect it very much resembled. It was also quite at home when taken into the house, to which, as soon as it was let out of its kennel in the stable, it would dart off with all the speed of which its clumsy legs were capable; but woe to the unfortunate carpet if he were unwittingly left in the room alone. His powerful claws, just like a bear's in miniature, would make wonderfully short work of it, and speedily reduce its gaudy yarns into a variegated heap of shoddy, if Master Badger were not immediately rejoined by society, either human or canine, or released from solitary confinement, to which he seemed to have an unconquerable aversion during legitimate play-hours. He was very much attached to a good-natured Clumber spaniel, his frequent companion; and sadly did he often put Ponto's patience to the test by tagging the silken fringes of his legs and tail with a degree of impertinence not easily to be borne with. He would romp with the children, bounding from their attempts to catch him, or to them, with the greatest glee. He was next permitted to follow his master into the fields, which he would do for miles, or as long as he thought proper, just like a dog, running almost constantly around, hunting like a terrier with his nose to the ground, his game being worms and beetles. Occasionally, also, when first taken, he indulged in a scamper at full speed for a considerable distance, but readily answering to his name and returning, when he would lie down panting, with his tongue out, between

his master's feet, a favourite refuge when anything suddenly alarmed him. When first restrained by the leash-cord he generally fell into a towering rage; he would throw himself upon the crown of his head, and bite savagely at the chain of the couples between his forelegs. It is in this position the badger usually acts upon the defensive when baited with dogs, thus defending the more vulnerable parts of the chest from attack, whilst nothing but the thick and almost impenetrable skin of the neck is presented to the teeth of the dog.

There are many who consider the badger a really pretty animal, with its regularly striped face of pure black and white, its white-tipped little ears, and its fresh and glossy skin, with its coat, which furnishes bristles or rather hair for our shaving or artists' brushes. The peasants of the Tyrol and Southern Germany hang badgers' skins on the collars of their dray-horses, as they last longer than any other fur. The animals there are taken by the small breed of dogs called "Dachshunde," that attack the animal in its burrows, and hold on until the sportsman with spade and sack succeeds in digging out the game. A badger-skin there is generally valued at six florins, and the grease sells very well at the apothecary's. In Belgium the country people never kill the badger, excepting for their skins, as they consider they do more good than harm.

It is understood that the badgers live in pairs for life, and no animal has its vital functions more under the control of the atmosphere than this; the extremes of heat and cold would kill it, and it is wonderful to notice that the very parts so well protected in other animals are the most exposed in this. Many quadrupeds who feed on grass do not pair, but there are exceptions; and Buffon remarks that the roe deer, though they feed upon grass, do pair, and have annually but one litter. It is a great and unchanging law of nature that the time of gestation in the same species of animal, no matter in what climate, never alters; but the time of bringing forth their young depends upon the time of the production of their food. For instance, in Italy sheep carry the usual time and bring forth in November and December, the time when the grass is in its best state for pasture; in April it is burnt up, and sheep have nothing to browse upon but shrubs. It is supposed that the badger is an exception, and the great

length of time in gestation is owing to the peculiarities of the atmosphere and the state of its food. The number of young appears not to exceed three or four. They are said to be born blind, but we have not met with anyone who has seen the cubs in this stage.

It may be therefore deduced from the foregoing facts that, although in a state of nature the badger destroys rabbits or other small animals that may chance when hard pressed by hunger to fall in its way, yet the whole of the more weighty evidence we have gathered, personally and otherwise, goes to convince us that worms, slugs, frogs, beetles, wild bees, their honey, as well as wasps and other grubs, constitute the greater part of its food. If we are correct, the badger, if not a positively beneficial animal, is a comparatively useful one, and really harmless both to the farmer and game-preserver. It is therefore a matter of deep regret that in many parts of England prejudice and ignorance of its nature have combined to render it nearly extinct. The poor wretch has undergone ages of persecution, let us hope that the few that are left amongst us may receive very different treatment; and with a proper sense of justice towards these animals, the term "badgering," now significant of heartless annoyance, if not of brutal depravity, may become obsolete.

CHINESE FOLK-LORE.

OUR article of more than four years ago* by no means exhausts the subject of Chinese superstitions. The heathen Chinese is perhaps the most elaborately superstitious being in the world; his pantheon is as vast as that of the old Romans before they adopted the Greek mythology; and besides his regular gods and goddesses, he has an innumerable auxiliary host of elves, fairies, spirits of the dead, and spirits of all kinds definable and undefinable. This seems strange among a people whose official religion, Confucianism, is certainly agnostic, and whose adopted creed, Buddhism, is supposed by its admirers to be a very good sample of pure theism; and it would be interesting to see what has been the effect on the Chinese mind of the late terrible famine in regard to these matters. Has it made the people more or less superstitious? Has it made them

more disposed to listen to Confucius, when he says: "As for the gods we can't know anything about them; the best thing for us is to do our duty steadily in regard to what we do know?" Or has it made them believe that the King of Heaven, or the great royal five-clawed dragon, or Yu-shih, "the master of rain," was angry, and that therefore the sky was for so many months like brass, and the crops could not grow in the baked soil? The experience of mankind points to the latter result; though, curiously enough, one of the speakers at the Sheffield Church Congress last year said, in the discussion on Modern Doubt, that our recent disasters, the sinking of the Princess Alice, &c., had shaken the faith of a good many of his congregation. If our faith is shaken because of a colliery explosion, due like other explosions to accumulation of fire-damp, and because, a few days before the said explosion, a river-steamer, steered by an inexperienced hand, is run into by a big ship floating down with the tide, it is a very strange kind of faith indeed—a faith that charges man's shortcomings upon the Divine Maker, and thinks that He is bound to set right all that man leaves wrong; a far more impudent faith than that of the Chinese as depicted in those "famine pictures by a native artist" which were last year largely circulated in London.

But our present business is not with faith but with folk-lore; and the first thing which strikes us herein is the strange similarity between Chinese myths and stories and those of Western Europe. We noticed this in regard to proverbs,† where, indeed, it is less to be wondered at, for proverbs are the expression of the collective wisdom and experience of a race, and these must be somewhat similar whether the race be white or yellow. But that fancy should play in the same fashion among Celestials as among us of the Aryan family is much more remarkable. A French ethnologist, M. Pouchat, was so impressed with the radical difference between Chinamen and all other men, that he hesitated not to say: "If the man in the moon has a language, it can't be more unlike all other human languages than the Chinese is." Here, however, is a tale the analogue of which is found almost everywhere in Western folk-lore. The seven sleepers of Ephesus, the mediæval romance of Ogier le Danois, and the old Gaelic legend on

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 12, page 64, "Chinese Superstitions."

† ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 12, page 498, "Chinese Proverbs."

which that romance is based, of Oisin's sojourn in the land of youth, are a few of the many forms which it takes in the West. The Chinese story is as follows: "Two friends wander among the mountains culling simples. At a fairy bridge, the azure bridge, they find on guard two maidens of more than earthly beauty. 'Come across the bridge,' cry the maidens. This done, the friends are fed on huma (hemp, the Chinese haschish), and falling deeply in love with their hostesses, spend with them in the Jasper City what seems the short though blissful period of a few days. At length they are seized with a desire to visit their earthly home, and on getting back they find that seven generations have passed, and they have become more than centenarians." The story is given in the *Liao chai chih yi*, with the date A.D. 60 to 70, and the names of the two friends!

Another equally circumstantial tale records how Wang Chih, one of the patriarchs of the Taoist sect, was one day gathering firewood in the mountains of Ku Chow, when he entered a grotto where some old men were deep in a game of chess. He laid down his axe and watched them; whereupon one of the old men handed him what looked like a date-stone, telling him to put it in his mouth. No sooner had he tasted it than he ceased to feel hunger and thirst. By-and-by one of the players said: "It is long since you came here, you should go home now." Wang Chih went to take up his axe, and found the handle had mouldered into dust. Undismayed, however, he went home; but found that centuries had passed since he went out wood-cutting. No vestige of his kinsfolk remained. The end of this tale is certainly un-European; for Wang Chih retreats to a cell in the mountains, and, devoting himself to religious exercises, finally attains immortality.

The useful brownie, of whom Sir Walter Scott tells us so much, finds his representative in China. Among many tales about such helpful beings, one of the least European is the following: "In the Tse dynasty, one Chang Ching, going out at night, saw a woman on the south corner of his house. She beckoned him to come to her, and said: 'This is your honour's mulberry-ground, and I am shên [fairy; the resemblance to the Gaelic "sighe," pronounced "sheegh," as in Banshee, is curious] of this place. If you will make next year, in the middle of the first moon, some thick congee and present it to me, I'll engage to

make your mulberry-trees a hundred times more productive.' Ching made the congee, and afterwards had a great crop of silkworms. Thence came the custom of making thickened congee on the fifteenth of the first month."

Archdeacon Gray gives a story from one of those Chinese children's books the whole teaching of which is to inculcate duty to parents. Sao Che's father and mother fell into such poverty that the son, after many efforts to put things right, at last sold himself in order to provide them with comforts. As he was going to his new master's home, he was met by a lady of surpassing beauty, who insisted on marrying him. They travelled on together, and she confided to him that she was rather clever at silk-weaving. She set to work, and soon finished so many silk pieces that she not only bought her husband's freedom but had enough left to maintain his parents. The pair started homeward, but when they reached the spot where he first met her, she was drawn up into a luminous cloud and disappeared.

Sometimes the mischievous fairy is almost identified with one of the monkey tribe. Thus a man with a very pretty wife, travelling near Chang-tih, was warned that hard-by lived a shên who was given to woman-stealing. He hid his wife in an inner room; but in the fourth watch of the second night she was carried off. He sought her high and low, his romantic and perilous adventures being described in *The History of the White Monkey*, by Kung T'sing. At last he came to a stone door in the face of a mountain. Some women, who were passing in and out, told him his wife was there. "Get us," said they, "ten dogs, two barrels of spirits, and a quantity of hempen rope, and we will try to deliver her for you." After all these things had been provided, the shên came in, and drank the spirit and ate the dogs, and while he was gorged and helpless the women bound him to the bed. They called in the husband, who found that he was an enormous monkey. He straightway killed him, and set free, not his own wife only, but many other women who were held in captivity. Talking of monkeys, we may remark that they, as well as men, are supposed to have ghosts. A man in Canton, named Ling, had had a yuan monkey in his family forty years. This species is supposed to grow to a very large size if it is allowed to drink plenty of water; and as Ling preferred a small monkey, his pet was kept on short

water allowance. One day the monkey snatched a cup out of the hand of Ling's youngest son, and drained it off. The father gave him a good whipping; whereupon the monkey sulked, refused food, and died in a few days. Soon after his ghost began to haunt the house; strange noises were heard; food unaccountably disappeared; and at last a fire broke out. Ling moved into another house, but the ghost moved too; and at last he was compelled to take refuge in the temple of the five hundred worthies. Here the ghost did not dare to follow him; and not many years ago the family might be seen housed in the temple, everybody in the quarter knew for what reason.

Ghosts whom nobody owns, spirits of poor men who have died at street-corners, and such like, are not unnaturally malevolent. They cause epidemics, and have to be driven off by firing crackers; or, if people prefer appeasing them, they set out plates full of cakes, with invitations to "the honourable homeless ghosts." The ghosts of suicides are particularly difficult to be appeased; their sole aim in life (or rather in death) seems to be to induce others to do as they have done. If you sleep in the room where anyone hanged him or herself, you are sure to receive during the night a pressing invitation to commit *felo de se*. At Hangchow, by the north gate, was a house so haunted by demons that it was to be had a bargain. A scholar, named Ts'ai, bought it, and, since none of his family would go with him, went to sleep there alone. He lighted a candle, and kept watch. At midnight a woman came slowly in with a red silk handkerchief round her neck, saluted him, tied a rope to a beam, and put her neck in it. Ts'ai watched her, but did not change a muscle. She then fastened up another rope, and invited him to put his head in likewise. He laughed, and lifting up his foot, put that into the noose. "You're wrong," said she. "No," he replied; "you were wrong years ago, or you'd never have done what you did." The ghost gave an exceeding bitter cry, bowed to Ts'ai, and departed; and from that time the house was no more haunted. Ts'ai afterwards rose to great distinction, as he deserved to do, passing all his examinations, and becoming provincial councillor.

Of course, the ghosts of so shrewd a people are often mixed up with money transactions. A man's ghost, streaming with water, appeared to his wife, and said:

"Wife, I shall never kiss you any more, for I've been drowned. But, happily, before I went on board, I entrusted to a friend all the money I'd been gathering, and he will bring it you." Sure enough, a few days after, the friend turned up, bringing a roll of dollars, and the news of the disaster. "One day," says a writer in the North China Daily News, "my teacher failed to come and give me his lesson. The reason he gave was as follows: 'My uncle is dead, and so I could not come to your excellency. Three years ago, a soldier, who lived near us, had to join his regiment against the rebels. He left his money, forty dollars, for my uncle to take care of; but we never heard of him again. He must have been killed. Three days ago my uncle, who had been ailing, told us he was going to die. 'That soldier,' said he, 'has appeared to me, and bidden me join him in the spirit world.' 'Have you done anything wrong with the money, uncle?' we asked; 'for, if so, we may make restitution, and, by punishing you, appease the soldier.' 'No,' replied my uncle, 'the money is where I put it at first; in such and such a drawer.' Sure enough there it was; but my uncle died nevertheless." Here is a story vouched for by Mr. Christopher Gardner, of Her Majesty's Consular service, who has paid much attention to Chinese folk-lore. It happened only six years ago. Chang and Li were partners. They had been out collecting debts, and were returning home by boat when Chang pushed Li overboard, in order to get all the money for himself. Next year, at the very date of the murder, Chang fell ill, and Li's ghost appeared to him, and said: "Unless you pay over to my family my share of that money, you shall surely die." "I will," said Chang; but when he got well he forgot his promise. The year after, at the same time, he fell ill again. Again the ghost appeared, angrier than before, and extorted another promise, which Chang kept. However, he could not rest; business fell off; and he determined to try his luck at Honan. There, in broad daylight, in a public street, he came upon Li. He rushed up to him in abject terror, and said: "I've done what you ordered, why do you haunt me still?" "What do you mean?" said Li; "I'm no ghost." Whereupon Chang confessed, and told how he had twice seen the ghost, and how he had duly paid the money. Li, nothing disconcerted, and nowise enraged, replied:

"So I didn't fall in by accident, then. I had neglected to pay the fitting rites to my father's spirit, and I thought the ducking was a reminder; but I see it was all your doing. Good-day."

Ghosts are often introduced into Chinese plays, and in one farce the ghost turns the tables on his would-be exorcist. The priest comes in with big gong, robes, mitre, &c., but the ghost catches hold of the gong, and beats the devil's tattoo on it, claps the mitre on his own head, strips the priest of his robes, and vows he'll exorcise his reverence. "Oh, your excellency," whimpers the priest, falling on his knees, "had I known you'd really been in the house, I'd never have come near the place. I only came to try to earn a few cash." The ghost, however, exorcises him without mercy, and he has to decamp minus his paraphernalia.

Ghosts of gods are not uncommon, and are often highly serviceable. A few years ago, the following was gravely related in the Peking Gazette. "When the Mahometans were besieging Changwei, they suddenly halted and ran away. The fact was they had approached the temple of Ta-pi-peh (god of the planet Venus), and there they saw an awful vision: gods in golden mail, numerous as forest trees and armed with sword and shield, were drawn up in battle array along the city wall, and red lamps innumerable lighted them up. The enemies' hearts failed them, and a sudden discharge of cannon put them to flight."

Here is another ghost story: An old and a young scholar were linked in the closest bonds of friendship. While the elder man was away on a journey, he died suddenly. The younger knew nothing about it till one night his bed-curtains were drawn back, and his friend laid his hand on his shoulder, saying: "Brother, I am dead, and have come to say good-bye." The young man was terribly frightened, but the ghost said: "Don't be afraid. If I'd wished to harm you, why should I have explained to you that I am a ghost? Besides, I have come to ask three things of you." "What can I do?" gasped his young friend. "I've a young wife, and a mother over seventy. A few piculs of rice will keep them from starving. Have pity on me, and provide for their wants. Then I have an essay not yet printed. Cut out a block for it, and print it, that my name may not utterly perish. Next, I owe the stationer a few

thousands of cash. Pay him." His friend nodded assent. The ghost then stood up, and said: "As you've been so kind as to grant my requests, I will go." But the young scholar had now lost all fear, and incautiously replied: "We have been such close friends, you had better stay a little while with me." The ghost wept, and came and sat on the bed, and talked about all sorts of things. By-and-by he again said, "I must go now;" and his friend noticed that his eyes grew wild and staring, his whole features changed, and he stood stock still. This, of course, frightened the young fellow, and he sprang out of bed and ran off, the ghost after him. The ghost was gaining, when they came to a wall over which the young man leaped; but whether it was protected by some sacred word pasted on it, or whether walls are, to Chinese ghosts what running water is to European witches, the story does not say. Anyhow, the ghost could not leap it, but remained with his head hanging on one side (he was a very material ghost), and his body on the other. The young man fell down in a swoon, and next morning some passers-by picked him up, and brought him to himself with a good dose of ginger. The dead man's friends got news of the strange position in which he was, and took him down and buried him. Let us hope they took proper measures to prevent his doing such a vampire trick another time.

Here is another class of superstition, which reminds us of some weird German and Slav legends about building a living man or woman into a bridge or tower, which could on no other conditions be completed. "When the bell-tower of Peking was built," says Mr. Stent, in a paper on Chinese legends, "the Emperor Yung-lo, of the Ming dynasty, ordered a great mandarin, named Kuan-yu, to cast a bell big enough for such a noble building. Time after time Kuan-yu and the cleverest workmen in the country tried to cast a bell and failed; the casting was always honeycombed, and the emperor said that if there was one more failure, Kuan-yu's head should pay the forfeit. Now, Kuan-yu had a daughter, a lovely girl of sixteen, named Ko-ai; and when she learnt what was to be done, she went to a celebrated astrologer, and asked the cause of her father's failure. Some demon, she was told, required a maiden's blood to be mixed with the metal, and unless this was done the next casting would be a failure like

the others. Ko-ai at once took her resolution. She got leave from her father to be present at the casting; and amid the dead silence which prevailed when the taps were drawn and the molten stream poured down into the mould, a shriek was heard, and crying out, 'For my father,' Ko-ai threw herself headlong into the seething metal. One of the workmen tried to seize her, but only succeeded in getting hold of a shoe, which came off in his hand. The father had to be held back by force from following Ko-ai's example. He was taken home a raving madman; but the bell was perfect in make and tone, and when struck its sonorous boom is to this day followed by a low wailing sound like the wail of a woman in agony, and when people hear it, they say: 'There's poor Ko-ai calling for her shoe.'

Where did those tales come from which we call the Arabian Nights? Some of them, we know, tell us about Chinese emperors and princesses—Badroulboudour, to wit. Of others, Chinese legends give us other forms. Thus "Open Sesame" finds its parallel in the story of a cave, near which lived a poor young herdsman, who bore the not unusual name of Chang. One day, as he was passing, he heard a voice say: "Stone door, open. Mr. Kwei-ku is coming." The cave opened, and the invisible speaker entered; and, by-and-by, the same voice said: "Stone door, shut; Mr. Kwei-ku is going." Whereupon the cave closed, so that no one could see where the entrance had been. Chang at once determined to see what was inside; so, one day, taking care that Mr. Kwei-ku was gone out, he used the formula, and at once gained an entrance. Chinese legends are often unpractical, so we need not wonder that there is no hint of any treasure inside. It was simply a vast romantic cavern. He came out, shut the door by using the proper form of words, and then told his only living relative, his grandmother. She must needs see it too; but, wandering inside, they got separated, and Chang, fancying she had left first, came out and closed the cave's mouth. Not finding her at home, he rushed back horror-stricken to seek her, but now all his efforts to obtain an entrance failed. The magic words had lost their power; and he felt that his grandmother must be either starved to death or devoured by Mr. Kwei-ku. Just then this dreaded personage appeared to him, and told him that the fates had

taken his grandmother; the cave demanded a victim. Let him marry, and take comfort in the thought that his children would have power over demons. And so it was; Chang's son became "the master of heaven," the first holder (A.D. 25 is about the date assigned to the story) of an office which has lasted on to the present day.

Stories of magic tombs are found among most people, nor are they wanting in China. Kung-ming was a sort of Chinese Michael Scott; and one day the Emperor Hung-wu and his chief councillor, passing near his tomb, were seized with a wish to visit it. The emperor and his courtier wore suits of iron mail, after the fashion of those days; so, breaking through into the antechamber, they read an inscription that whoever visited the tomb should have his hands tied—a prophecy fulfilled by their hands getting for some time fast wedged into the passage through which they squeezed themselves. Breaking through the second door, they found several figures towards which they began to be attracted by an irresistible force. Full of terror, they flung off their armour and fled, noting as they ran out another inscription, which Mr. Denny's (Folk-lore of China) renders thus:

I'll strip off the skin
Of whose ventures in
To open this my grave.

Of course the figures were of loadstone, which in the legends of mediæval Europe, as well as in the Arabian Nights and in Chinese stories, was credited with very mysterious powers. When Confucius died, one of his disciples cased his coffin in loadstone; and thus the Emperor Chin was baffled in his attempt to open the sage's tomb—the workmen's pickaxes and spades lost their heads, the armour of the soldiers on guard was stripped off their bodies; altogether, things took such a strange turn that the attempt was given up.

Who would believe that our Punch and Judy, with Messrs. Codlins and Short in pigtails, were known in China long before they began to delight the street-boys, first of Italy, and then of France and England? Anyhow, the common Chinese puppet-show is said to tell the story of General Mao-tun and his wife Ob. Lady Ob was so jealous that she led her husband a sad life, and often interfered with his success in war. Thus when he was besieging the city of Ping, its astute defender, Chang-ping,

made a lovely ballet-dancer of wood, and by means of strings and springs set her pirouetting on the battlements. Lady Ob saw her, and determined that, cost what it might, that fascinating creature must not fall into her husband's power, so she schemed in such a way that Mao-tun was obliged to raise the siege. This was B.C. 260, or earlier; and thenceforward the bald-headed irascible old general and his shrewish wife, and the interesting creature on the city wall have figured, with other characters, in what Lord Macartney, when China was almost an unknown country, thought a most creditable exhibition.

The Judgment of Solomon dates considerably farther back than the appearance of Punch and Judy in Europe; yet even this finds its parallel in China, only the mandarin, who plays Solomon, orders that the child shall be taken away from both women, and brought up as a government official. He judges that the real mother will eagerly accept so good a chance for her offspring, while the woman who only wanted to sell the babe, or to use it in begging, will clamour for its restoration. He, therefore, hands the little one to the claimant who, though with tears and sobs, had accepted his proposal. The story is said to be historical, but Mr. Dennys suspects that it may be derived from Indian or Semitic sources. That is just the difficulty in all these cases. The myth may have travelled eastward in the wake of the earliest caravans, or with the other teaching of those Nestorian Christians who penetrated into the heart of China long before the Tartar conquests, and whose influence on Buddhism has not yet been adequately taken into account. When we know more of Chinese literature, we shall see what stories really do date from pre-Christian times, and are therefore presumably home-grown. Till then, we must be content to be more puzzled than Solomon; of whose judgment here is another more Chinese version. A certain workman had a very good-looking wife, and they loved each other tenderly. But white dogs in China are often sad dogs; and, moreover, have sometimes the power of taking what human shape they like. So a white dog took the workman's shape, and walked into his house. Fortunately, he had miscalculated the time; for, just as he entered, the real husband returned, and the wife was thrown into a very piteous dilemma. Which was her husband she could not for the life of her make out. So she did as a sensible Chinese

woman would—made them both go with her to the mandarin's yamèn. But the mandarin was just as puzzled as the wife, the two men were so exactly alike. Fortunately, however, there was in the yamèn a most convenient tiger, which never would touch men, but was accustomed to feed on dogs. Knowing, therefore, the villainous ways of white dogs, the magistrate ordered both the self-styled husbands to be put into the tiger's cage. The tiger at once flew at and devoured the dog, and the woman got her real husband back; and they went off, praising the magistrate's wisdom.

Here is the Chinese Penelope. Pak-li-shi was a restless spirit always longing for adventure. He married and had a son, and then disappeared and was away more than thirty years, rising, meanwhile, to be prime minister in a neighbouring state (this was in the days when China was a group of kingdoms). One day his son saw a proclamation signed Pak-li-shi, and told his mother, who was reduced to be a wandering needlewoman. They agreed to go and see what the likeness of name might mean, and when they got to the capital of the kingdom, the mother turned ballad-singer, and scraped acquaintance with the great man's servants. They told her that their master was subject to fits of low spirits through the loss of his family, which he had been for years unable to find. She persuaded them to let her try if her songs would soothe him, improvised a touching ballad, was recognised, and they were happy ever after.

Another story. An officer went to the wars, and was for many years away from wife and mother. Coming home at last, he spied, not far from his house, a woman who he thought was his wife. "Ah, I'll see whether she is really true to me," thought the foolish man; and so he did what he could to add to the incognito which years had made pretty complete, and introduced himself as her husband's friend. After some pleasant talk the stranger grew so warm in his attentions that the lady, getting frightened, and being far from succour, flung a handful of sand in his eyes, and ran home. He followed her as soon as he had washed his eyes clean, and was making himself known to his mother when the wife came in, and, seeing the stranger who had insulted her, rushed away and hanged herself. Fortunately, she was cut down in time, and reconciled to her husband.

And so we might go on, for almost every page of Mr. Dennys's Folk-lore is deeply interesting, not only in itself, but because it constantly reminds us of old nursery tales and European folk-lore. Mr. Dennys gathers not from China proper only, but from the Loo-choo isles, from which he gives a story (brought from Loo-choo by envoy Li Ting Yuan in 1802) the exact counterpart of many Western tales, and of one story in the Arabian Nights. A bachelor farmer finds a woman diving and washing herself in his well; and, angry at her shameless ways and at the fouling of the water, carries off her clothes, which were hanging on his pine-tree. Finding the clothes to be of "a ruddy sunset colour," and marvellous in texture, he comes back to see what would happen, and meets the woman wailing for the loss of them. "Why did you foul my water?" he asks. "Surely the Creator made the pine-tree and the well for the use of all." "Well, anyhow, fate has meant you to be my wife." So he puts away her magic garments, and she lives with him ten years, bearing him a son and daughter. But one day when he is gone from home, she just tries on the clothes, and the remembrance of her fairy-home comes on her so strongly that, bidding good-bye to her children, she glides off on a cloud and disappears, just as the merrow or sea-maiden on the Galway coast and in the outlying Hebrides leaves husband and bairns when she has tried on the long-laid-aside magic cap, by picking up which the fisher-lad had at the first compelled her to remain on land. The Loo-choo husband must have felt much as Mr. Matthew Arnold's "forsaken merman" felt when his earthly wife went away. Mr. Dennys's book, by-the-way, ought to be in every public library and young men's institution. It is a wonder in itself, and a proof that the Chinese are fit for something better than to be slaves of savage Cubans and scoundrelly Peruvians. Mr. Dennys explains that "type-setting, printing, and binding were entirely executed by Chinese; some allowance, therefore, will, it may be hoped, be made for mechanical defects." We only wish all home-printed books were as clearly and as creditably printed as this volume, which, got up at Hong Kong, may be had of Messrs. Trübner. Book and stories alike prove that there is a deal of our common humanity among these yellow-skins. Who has read that most pathetic

of all Bret Harte's tales, that of the little Chinese lad who was murdered by a mob of San Francisco rowdies? Who has read the thoughtful paper in Frazer on John Chinaman Abroad, and the excellent work that Mr. Guinness, of Queensland, credits him with? Such readers will take especial delight in tracing, in the folk-lore to which we have introduced them, the evidence that this temperate, hard-working creature, whom American and Australian workmen hate because he works for lower wages, is a man like ourselves, and has had from time immemorial (despite his widely different ways of looking at many things) the same feelings as our Western forefathers about matters which are sure to occupy the minds of men when first they begin to think of the spirit-world, and what it is to them.

ODD APPLICATIONS.

If the newspapers may be believed, the officials of the Admiralty were very lately taken aback by the widow of a Roman Catholic chaplain of the forces applying for a pension. She proved that she had been married to the chaplain, and as neither the law of the land or the rules of the Admiralty prescribed priestly celibacy the lady's demand had to be satisfied. Applications out of the common run are not always so successful.

The Commissioners of the International Exhibition of 1862 were the favoured recipients of a large sheet of cardboard bearing sundry unintelligible black marks, bringing with it an explanatory epistle running: "This, gentlemen, is done with charcoal—charcoal, no drawing-pencil, but simply charred wood. I want it exhibited, to show to the world that woman's mind is superior to circumstances; and that I, a woman without means, am superior to Michael Angelo." The cruel commissioners were deaf to the modest lady's appeal, rejecting her valuable contribution as curtly as they did that of a patriotic dog-fancier, hailing from Willenhall, who wrote: "Oi don't know if hanemals is to be showed; but if they be, oi got a dog, a bull-dog, has ansom as poant, and he wul kill rots agin any hanemal the furriners can bring—and there be chaps here has will fund money to back em—all oi wants his a chance at thim furriners, if they be going to bring

dogs oi must bring em mysel and if you be ready oi am—he as kill sixty rots in twenty minutes, and that is moor on any furriner can do; you be save on backing a me—send enuff munny to pay me railwa, and oi will be wi you."

One of Uncle Sam's coloured children, anxious to enhance the attractions of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, wanted to place his father, aged a hundred and two, on show; and consulted the representative of his State on the matter. "Was he Washington's body-servant?" enquired that gentleman. "No, sah," replied the negro; "but he looks very much like General Washington, sah, and has been taken for him several times." The darkey's notion of making an exhibit of his father reminds us of a story told by Mr. McCullough, the American actor. His man Robert, desiring leave of absence one Sunday, McCullough asked where he was going. "Going out with my girl, sir," was the answer. "I thought so," quoth the actor. "And where are you going with your girl?" "Going to see her grandfather, sir," said Bob. "She goes to see her grandfather every Sunday." "Good girl! Where does the old fellow live?" asked McCullough. "He doesn't live anywhere, sir," rejoined his servitor. "He's a skeleton in Wood's Museum at Bellevue Hospital."

When it was determined to send a certain number of commissioners to represent the United States at the Vienna Exhibition, General Van Buren, upon whom the selection devolved, had his patience sorely tried by office-seeking citizens. One man wanted his son inducted in order that he might perfect himself in German; another wished to have his brother sent "for the benefit of his health;" and a third requested the general to make a commissioner of his son, who was subject to fits, that he might be taken care of at one of the hospitals of Vienna. These appointment-hunters would have had a better chance of attaining their desires if they had been mindful of the old judge's advice: "Never give your reasons;" their reasons being about as germane to the matter as the qualifications set forth by certain candidates for the office of inspector of nuisances, who set a rural sanitary board the hard task of choosing between a travelling book-agent who could walk any distance; a pupil-teacher capable of teaching singing; an innkeeper with seven years' experience in

the public line, who, "therefore, had a perfect knowledge of sanatory work;" and a gentleman brought up to the farming line who "knew something of dranes."

A man who can adapt himself to circumstances is not easily rebuffed. A middle-aged man applied at one of the public schools of San Antonio for employment as teacher. He was informed there was no vacancy in any of the schools. Not at all discomfited he asked: "What did you say your schools ain't provided with?" "There is no vacancy," he was told again. With an engaging smile he replied: "No vacancy! jes' so, exactly. I comprehend. Well, you see, I never did teach in a school that had a vacancy; in the country, you know, the schools don't have no vacancies. I ain't got no use for one, no how, if the salary is only paid regularly." He was only got rid of by a promise that his application should be laid before the board at its next meeting. Equally accommodating was the musician who, answering an advertisement, wrote: "Gentlemen, I noticed your advertisement for organist and music teacher, either lady or gentleman. Having been both for several years, I offer you my services."

At a late meeting of the Hull Property Committee it was reported that twenty-one applications had been received from persons willing to accept the office of market-keeper and collector for the corporation. One of them was couched in a rather unusual way. Said the writer: "I beg most respectfully to offer myself as a candidate for the office of market-keeper, and if the present system of giving receipts for toll in faint pencil figures continues, I will do the duties without salary. If no receipts are to be given, as heretofore for many years, I will give you a hundred a year for the appointment. Testimonials as to character not enclosed. — Your obedient servant, An Observer of your Doings."

An officer at Secunderabad received an application for pecuniary assistance from a native, who put his sad case thus: "I got three brothers and two sisters, including me; but my brothers are dumbless, and they have no legs and hands; but for my another sister she have no eyes, and for myself I can't talk; and besides that my brothers and sister they never eat rice nor bread, except milk and sugar; and my brothers and sister they are turned as

Christians." In almost as bad plight personally was the native official wanting a holiday, who wrote his commanding officer: "Honoured Sir,—Having been amputated from my family for some years, and as I have complaints of the abdomen, coupled with great conflagrations of the internals, and prostration of all desire for work, with also the disgorging of my dinner, I hope your highness will excuse me attending an orderly-room for ten or nine more days, and in duty bound shall ever pray for the salubrity of your temper, and the enlargement of your family."

Hindoo-English is certainly funny reading. Among the four hundred applications for employment as census enumerators received by the president of the Madras municipality, one ran: "I am seeing in the papers that you is going to make a census of the peoples. I shall feel very much glad for to become an enumerator. I can make fast fast count. You can see by my writing that it is distinct and clear. I learned writing of one writing-master. I am living on the back-side of Veerasaurny Chetty's house." Quoth another candidate: "Allow me the prerogative to intrude on your valuable time, whose wheels roll in amber and in gold. Yet to try by scroll is a useful maxim to young and old, rich and poor, and a great deal may be got by those who put this simple but useful rule into practice. Having heard that enumerators for the preliminary census are about to exist in the municipal department, I most respectfully beg to offer my services for the forecited post. If I fortunately succeed I will give you all satisfaction I can produce in discharge of duties entrusted to me. I can speak the Tamil, Teloo goo, Hindoostanee, Burmese, and Malayalum languages."

It must be confessed that worse specimens of the Queen's English are to be found nearer home. An aspirant for admission into the Glasgow police force favoured the inspector with the following choice sample: "lochgilphed, 1878. mister sergen, I sen yu a fue lin to sa yull hed a plas to me un yur offish un tu polis fors I pe anfl gled uf yul tuk me un tu yu ofis. i pe a 24 yeir an a 6 fits an a stockn. mr Robirtan hes a charactiar 5 yeir lon, an me an my brodr tanoaul cum tu yu an he pe as hier a hed as me cum tu yu an he pe yull tuk we tugtgher rot tul me sun ur pe kum tu yu ta tay bifor tomorn min to rot to me—dagald m'Tavish."

A gentleman in Morayshire was not a little amused by the postman bringing him one morning this letter from a young fellow: "Dear Sir, I beg Leve to inform you that we have a debetting soity, and the debate is dow drems cume trow or dow thay for shadow what is to cume to pass I have Promesed to asiste the one has the dreames I men to state that the drems cume trow and if you Could give me Ennay sistens on drems I will be much obliged to you and I hop you will Exquse me for yousing the Liberty and I will be vary anches to hear from you as the debate cumes of on Munday first." Still worse, considering the writer's object, was the epistle a tailor received from a customer: "Dear Sir, We are in the midst of a ken contest for the election of a school boord. And I have 2 requests to ask from you lst that you atend and give me your suport 2d that you allow me my new sute on that day. Be sure atend as I am afried I am to be beet."

He would have been "beet" at his own weapons had it fallen to his lot to correspond with Miss Rebecca Reynolds, who having a little proposition to make to a London theatrical manager, put it in this form: "Please sir, I Write the few Lines to you Hoping you Wont fell A fended at Me right in to you. Plese Sir I ham Perpose in a very nice Pece that well suit our house and I can play it very nice and the house will take for I have plad in redy I was cam in as A Dancer but the Money was so very Little that I could not Play in a Pece and I cane Dance sing sa if you Will Let Me Play it I indevor to Please the Pepell and I no the More I Play it the More the House will take the title of the Pece is cald Leve it to Me and I will find it and it never been Played Before not Eny Wear so if you Would Like Me to Play it Will you send to Me." We fear the manager was not of Barnum's mind, who engaged a carpenter merely because in his application for employment the man said he was "youste" to hard work, and the showman thought if his work was only as strong as his spelling he was just the man for him. Barnum, however, did not always succumb to an orthographical onslaught, for a begging-letter writer could not charm any dollars out of his pockets, although he assured him that he "took grait pleashur in reading the bibel speshily the Proffets."

Editors are accustomed to receiving

strange applications. A Bombay journalist was startled by the sudden appearance in his sanctum of a gentleman in full evening dress, who, after informing him that he "wouldn't be a Scotchman for a bucketful of ha'pennies," proceeded to explain his business. He had been at a grand native marriage, and he wanted the editor to give his readers a full description of the affair. Asked the names of the parties, "Now, faith, that's awkward," said he. "I promised the owld Mussulman or the owld Parsee that I would get a long account of his son's marriage printed in the papers, and I've clean forgotten to ask him his name. But the owld fellow's a director in some of the banks here, and ye might look up the guide for the name; wouldn't that be enough for ye?" Hardly, the editor thought, but asked him for some facts about the affair. "Facts is it ye want?" queried the Irishman. "Sure I don't know of any at all, except that there was a splendid band, and that it was a magnificent affair, and all that, and that the elect, as ye might say, of the Parsee, or Mussulman, community were present, and that's all I know." The editor expressed a wish that he knew a little more, and enquired where the marriage came off; that, however, his new acquaintance could not tell for the life of him. "What's the good of bothering me with all these questions?" he exclaimed. "Sure haven't ye got imagination? Aren't you fellows accustomed to imagination?" The gentleman of the press acknowledged he was, more or less, but that the stock of that article then on the premises was not equal to discovering the names of the parties concerned in the marriage, the whereabouts of the marriage, or the particulars of the gaieties at the marriage. "Well," said he, "if ye can't do that I don't see the good of the imagination of the press, and I'm sorry for ye, and rather disappointed myself." He was told that in any case it would be too late, at that time of night, to attempt a full description of the mysterious marriage, and that possibly he might be able to call again when he remembered some details. His face beamed again, and assured on the editor's word of honour that it was too late to get an account of the affair in the morrow's paper, "Praise be to the pigs!" said he, "I've got a good excuse for the owld Parsee, or Mussulman, without saying anything about the imaginary business;" and he took himself off.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

THE STORY.

CHAPTER I. MAUVAIN TAKES REFUGE IN THE SILVER ISLE.

THE progress of time had no softening effect upon the evil reputation of the accursed mount. For more than a hundred years no human sound had proceeded from the deserted heights; shadowless forms held dominion there, spirits wrapt in a deadly mantle of silence. The fair white snow-land gleamed as beautifully now in the eye of the sun as it had done thousands of years ago, and it would have been difficult for a stranger to believe that a tragedy in which God's judgment had been so fearfully demonstrated could ever have occurred upon its stainless bosom. But the story of the crime and its punishment formed the blackest page in the history of the Silver Isle, and the pure and peaceful aspect of the Mount did not lessen the abhorrence in which it was held by the islanders. Even now, although six generations of men had passed away since the awful night upon which the destruction of the sinner and his symbol was accomplished, only one girl in the Silver Isle dared to tread the upward way, and only one man's shadow fell upon the rugged paths leading to the basin of eternal snow.

The man was Ranf the Deformed, the girl Evangeline.

In the year 1830 of the present century an unusual circumstance occurred; the white sails of a schooner were seen within a few miles of the isle. A visit from the outer world was an event so rare that the islanders watched with deep interest the movements of the schooner. Children ran to the hillocks, and gazed with delight upon the snowy wings of the sea-bird; women also experienced a feeling of pleasure in observing the graceful dip and rise of the vessel. Their pleasure was not shared by the older residents of the isle, who silently asked each other whether the schooner came as friend or foe. The question was soon answered. The schooner anchored in the bay; in the evening a boat rowed towards the shore, and four sailors and a landsman leaped upon the beach. Two chests were in the boat, and these were brought to land, and placed on the beach, high up, out of reach of the tide. This done in silence, the

sailors, obeying the instructions of the landsman, returned to the boat, and rested on their oars, waiting for further orders. The man who remained was roughly attired, and for a moment or two he stood silently regarding a group of islanders who were watching his proceedings. Presently he approached them and addressed them in courteous tones:

"I am flying for my life," he said. "I come to you for shelter and protection."

His demeanour was so easy and unreserved as to appear to some to afford a contradiction to the serious import of his words; but it was evident to the more experienced that he was in earnest.

In front of the group stood one of the magistrates of the isle, known as Father Sebastian.

"This is not a sanctuary," said Father Sebastian; "it is a land whose inhabitants desire to live in peace with all men. If you are flying for your life you have committed crime."

"Not so," rejoined the stranger in a light tone; and it was apparent from his speech and bearing that he was a gentleman, despite his common dress, "unless it be a crime to have opinions. It is one of the misfortunes of our family. I have played a part in a too turbulent civilisation; having opinions, I expressed them; having the honour of an ancient name to uphold, I upheld it. No semblance of a crime can be laid at my door; I simply happen to belong to the party that is out of power, and, being down instead of up, I am naturally disgusted with the world until my turn come again; I seek the security that is to be found in forgetfulness; in this I follow the footsteps of my grandfather, who fifty years ago, under precisely similar circumstances, sought refuge here and obtained it. He did not abuse your hospitality. Our name is Mauvain."

"Your name is known," said Father Sebastian. "I am old enough to have a dim remembrance of your grandfather, who, after he left this isle, sent us remembrances which we still possess."

"Our family were ever grateful," said Mauvain with a bow. "In my boyhood I often heard my grandfather speak in terms of admiration of your ways and mode of life; therefore," he added, with a touch of pleasant sophistry, "your virtues are to blame for my intrusion. These papers will prove that I am the person I represent myself to be." He paused for a little while to allow Father Sebastian to

examine the papers, and then continued: "I beg you to place faith in my assurance that I will not bring trouble upon your peaceful isle. All I ask is permission to remain here till I can return to my native land."

He held out his hand, which Father Sebastian accepted, and thus Mauvain was made free of the isle.

Thereafter, from time to time, a brig or schooner came to the isle, bringing Mauvain letters and newspapers which he read with eagerness, and bringing also implements and tools of use to the islanders, which Mauvain employed in the way of barter and exchange. By these means he became the owner of land, and he was soon looked upon by the islanders as one of themselves. He had already told them that he possessed opinions; in addition, he possessed ideas, and being of an energetic, restless nature, he strove to make them popular. In this he was unsuccessful. The islanders would have none of his crotchets. The Silver Isle could always boast of wise men who directed its affairs, and who, born in simplicity, and living happily and contentedly in that state, were anxious to avoid disturbing elements. Especially were they anxious that the minds of their young men should not be agitated by wild theories. But Mauvain was by nature dogmatic and obstinate, and it needed a strong remonstrance before he could be made to relinquish the idea of making their wills the slaves of his.

"Let be, Mauvain, let be," said Father Sebastian. "We are the best judges of whether we need this or that. Calmly reflect. Our forefathers left us an inheritance of contentment, which we in our turn desire to leave to our children. We are in harmony with each other, and we account indolence a vice. Brought up in virtue and industry, our young men and women live their lives in peace, and worship God. What changes have come upon our isle have come naturally, and we would not have it otherwise. Hot-houses are not to our taste. Friend Mauvain, keep your new-fangled notions to yourself, and do not strive to turn us from our ways. It is no reproach to us if we do not move as quickly as the country in which you have lived. Setting our experiences against yours, the advantage, I take it, is on our side. If things are well with men, it is a misfortune if they are tempted to believe that they are sent into

the world to set every wrong thing right. Each to do his best in the small circle in which he moves—that is both philosophy and religion: and it is our aim. We are not savages, as you see; we have a high regard for cleanliness and godliness; we have enough for our spiritual and temporal needs; and, friend Mauvain, if you have not already learned it, you are old enough to learn it now—enough is enough."

Mauvain shrugged his shoulders. "Make a troglodyte of me," he said with a slight sneer, "or teach me to crawl like the crab."

But he had the grace to recognise that it would be a breach of hospitality to continue his endeavour to force his opinions upon the islanders. Condemned by circumstances to remain among them, it was impossible he could pass his days in idleness. For a time he shut himself up with his books and newspapers, but they were not sufficient to satisfy his active temperament. He strove to lighten the weary hours by writing something in the form of memoirs, but it was not long before he flung away the pen. Then the beauty of the isle drew him forth, and he wandered over its length and breadth. "Looking for fairies," he said sportively. He found neither fairy nor malignant spirit, nor did he chance upon an Aladdin's cave, although the isle was prolific in rare surprises. But he made a substantial discovery. In a wild gulch in an uninhabited part of the isle he found traces of silver ore. The land round about was waste land, and he purchased it of the commonwealth, paying for it in ploughs and harrows of improved design. He prosecuted his search, and hired three men to work for him in the gulch during the winter season. They unearthed a rich mine, and in the spring Mauvain and his workmen returned to the centre of population, bringing with them some sacks of silver ore. He exhibited the treasure exultantly to the islanders, and told them it was freislebenite, and contained antimony, lead, sulphur, and silver. They smiled at his enthusiasm, and said they preferred golden grain. The ore, however, was melted, and a large yield of silver was obtained. It was of little value to Mauvain or to anyone else on the isle; but Mauvain continued to work the mine intermittently, chiefly for the purpose of employing his time. It could scarcely have been for gain, for he was otherwise rich in his own right in the country to which he was not free to return.

But the release came at last, and after the lapse of a dozen years he received the welcome news that he might return in safety to his native land. His face brightened with joy, and yet, as he drew a deep breath, and extended his arms to embrace the genius of liberty, he felt a pang of regret. Yesterday the isle had been a prison; to-day it was fair and sweet in his eyes; yesterday it was a cage, to-day it was a garden. How bright were the clouds; how fragrant the air; how beneficent the earth! Never in his dreams had he imagined a spot upon earth so calm, so peaceful, so free from care! The islanders were sorry to part with him, for he had proved himself an agreeable companion, and, as far as his restless nature would permit, had conformed to their ways.

An old-time friend brought Mauvain the news of his release, and in the pretty house he had built for himself in the Silver Isle, he received all the particulars of the fortunate change in affairs which had restored him to his position in the world. It seemed as if he would never be done with his questions, so eager was he to hear all that had passed in his absence. He enquired with keen interest after old friends, and after such and such men whom he had known, and he learned that some were dead, some disgraced, some at the top of the ladder, some crawling in the gutters.

"Ah, well," said he, "'tis battledore and shuttlecock; I'll play the battledore for the future, be sure of that."

After women also he enquired, and learnt who led and who followed, who were sought after, who laughed at, and what was the character of the imperious beauty who reigned in the world of fashion. The most popular idol was one whom he had nursed on his knee before the tide of his fortune had changed for the worse; she was a child at that time—docile, meek, obedient—now she was a woman, haughty, proud, capricious. She, a patrician, and another, who had risen from vile depths, ruled the world of fashion between them. A smile rested upon Mauvain's handsome lips as he listened and dreamt of future conquests. While the conversation was proceeding he unlocked a chest, and producing therefrom a suit of the finest clothes, began to deck himself out as became his rank and station. With the delight of a child he contemplated the reflection of his fine feathers in the mirror.

"I am going to live once more," he thought, as he sprinkled a delicate perfume over his clothes, and he made a vow to drink the cup of pleasure to the last drop. Good and bad qualities were strangely commingled in his nature. A bit of a philosopher, vain and selfish, wise and dogmatic; capable of moralising truthfully upon the passing circumstance, and apt at the same time to applaud himself extravagantly for his critical insight; now haughty and now pleasantly familiar, thoughtful by instinct when his interest was served by it, generous in money matters, ready to disregard questions of morality where his pleasure was concerned, but most jealous in that respect towards those who were allied to him—this was Mauvain, who had one law for himself and another for his neighbour. Difficult to foresee what the future of such a man would be; but one thing was certain, he would float where many a better man would sink.

When, his toilet being completed, he stepped from his house and presented himself to the islanders, they saw a gentleman of rank, attired in silk and lace, with a sword hanging at his side. It was almost a metamorphosis. The man was there, but scarcely the man with whom they had been familiar. A dainty handkerchief was in his hand, which he waved lightly in the air; a jewelled snuff-box, too, although he hated snuff. Fortunate, therefore, that the box was empty. The life he had led on the isle had so greatly benefited him that he looked younger than he had done on the day, a dozen years ago, he first appeared among them. The admiration that his appearance excited pleased him, and he inclined his head this way and that, as though he were a king receiving the congratulations of his subjects; and as he bowed with a superb and affable air, he daintily regaled his nose with pinches of nothing from his jewelled snuff-box. The islanders, somewhat awed by his grand manner, presented him with small tokens of affection, and expressed their regret at his departure.

"Regret," said Father Sebastian gravely, "which I am sure is mutual. Mauvain knows how to appreciate the inner life; his sojourn here has done him no harm."

"I am younger at heart," responded Mauvain gaily, "and older in wisdom. You have taught me much worth learning,

and I fear you must sometimes have considered me ungrateful. Yes; I feel that I have been happy. This isle contains the true elixir of life, and those qualities which best sweeten it, gentleness and content, grow like sweet roses in the summer air. I see in your faces the question: 'Why fly from us, then?' It would ill become me were I to say that a man is not an ox, whose only ambition it is to eat succulent grass and breathe fresh air. More grateful to say that there are also roses in my own land whose perfume I long to inhale, flowers which seem, although they may not be, as bright. I leave you with pleasure and regret. Do not think unkindly of me for my eagerness; our ambitions, our hopes, our desires, are widely apart. That the happier life is yours I do not dispute, but no man can resist his destiny, and mine lies yonder, across the sea, where already I see the lights and hear the music of familiar voices. Adieu, my friends. What property I have in this isle is in your charge until I, or some other who bears my name, appears to claim it. I go to take up the broken thread of life, and it will be pleasant to me to feel that I am still linked to the land which has sheltered me for so many years."

He spoke with emotion; the enforced repose he had enjoyed filled him now with gratitude, in which was curiously mingled a gentle glow of self-satisfaction. "Strange inconsistency of human nature," he muttered, "that we can only enjoy the past in the present!" So, with goodwill on both sides, he and his island friends bade farewell.

In papers that were found after his departure the disposition of his property was clearly set forth. He requested the islanders to make what use they pleased of his house, which was one of the largest and prettiest in the isle, and asked whoever occupied it to keep the grounds and garden around it in good order. As he had told them, all his property was to be considered theirs, with but one reservation, which referred to the silver mine in the gulch. In the event of its being worked, he desired that his proprietary rights should be recognised by a royalty of one-tenth portion of the silver it produced, which was to be stored until it was claimed by himself or his heirs. The islanders accepted the trust, and faithfully observed the conditions attached to it.

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